

**Indiana's Stellar Communities
Program**



*Call for
Letters of Interest*



January 16, 2014

INDIANA'S STELLAR COMMUNITIES REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST (LOI)

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) and the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) are seeking letters of interest from Local Units of Government (LUGs) that would like to participate in the State of Indiana's Stellar Communities Program.

Indiana's Stellar Communities Program is a collaborative effort by INDOT, IHCDA and OCRA seeking to engage two communities to achieve a three-year revitalization strategy. In the revitalization strategy communities will identify areas of interest and types of projects, produce a schedule to complete projects, produce cost estimates, identify local match amounts, sources, and additional funding resources, indicate the level of community impact, and describe the significance each project will have on the overall comprehensive revitalization of the community. From this revitalization strategy, communities will produce a three-year community investment plan which will identify capital and quality of life projects to be completed during that period.

Letter of Interest Requirements

Eligible Applicants must be a Local Unit of Government that is a city or an incorporated town not located within an entitlement community (only communities that participate in the State CDBG program are eligible). The LUG may subcontract with either not-for-profit entities and/or for-profit corporations to administer, design, develop and/or implement Stellar Community proposal activities. The applicant is also expected to identify a development team to plan and monitor implementation, which should include individuals with expertise and experience in successful community and economic development, project development and/or housing finance and development.

In order to submit a successful Letter of Interest you must:

- Have a Comprehensive Community Plan (or a similar planning document approved by the participating agencies) that was completed within the past seven years. Submit current council adoption document.
- Submit a 3-5 page Letter of Interest signed by the LUG's highest elected official;
- Complete the attached Stellar Communities Information Sheet.
- Submit a clear map (8 ½ X 11) of the community with proposed target area boundaries and proposed projects identified.
- Submit a Project Matrix.

Following receipt of the Letter of Interest, INDOT, IHCDA and OCRA will issue a solicitation for RFPs from selected LUGs that responded successfully to this request. Therefore, this request is intended for LUGs who are seriously interested in participating in a competitive RFP process to participate in the Stellar Communities Program. The Letter of Interest is the first step to communicate a holistic view of your community and to identify the targeted area for which to comprehensively complete projects within an expedited timeline.

Evaluation Criteria for Letter of Interest

Letters of Interest will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Regional value-added impact and attraction of future investment. The LOI needs to describe the targeted area while simultaneously relating to the community and the region.
- Reasonableness of scope of project and readiness status.
- Letter needs to address leadership capacity and describe community engagement including all current and planned collaboration.
- Description of resource availability and utilization of leveraged community assets and project sustainability.
- Description of community approach for the use of Stellar designation in branding/marketing.
- Description of any previous planning and implementation of projects in the proposed targeted area. Include recently completed projects, projects underway and future projects.
- Description of successful completion of multi-project management or anticipated coordinated approach of multi-project management.
- Must be in compliance and in good standing with all partner agencies including previous engagement.
- If the community is in a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area, the LOI submission must include a letter of acknowledgement from the MPO Chief Executive Officer.
- Documented and demonstrated capacity to complete the proposed activities, including the ability to submit a response to a request for proposal IF selected as a finalist. Describe anticipated Stellar team engagement. Specifically identify team members.
- If a community was a previous finalist, discussion of how the previous Strategic Investment Plan has worked and justify the need for updates to the Strategic Investment Plan.
- The Letter of Interest must include a completed Stellar Communities Project Matrix.
- Letter signed by the Chief Elected Official.

Submission of the Letter of Interest

Submit an electronic copy of the five documents (Adoption Resolution, Letter of Interest, The Stellar Communities Information Sheet, Stellar Communities Project Matrix and a Map) via the FTP site. We will only accept PDF Format. Submissions can be made at any time before **5:00 PM on February 19, 2014**. Please note submissions will have a time stamp of when it was sent. In fairness to all, late submissions will not be accepted.

To create a user name and password for the FTP site, please contact Gretchen Fisher at: grfisher@ihcda.in.gov. An e-mail confirmation will follow within 48 hours.

There will be a free Stellar Communities Informational Forum for communities wanting further information on Thursday January 30, 2014 from 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM at The Garrison at Ft. Benjamin Harrison State Park, Indianapolis.

Registration for this event is restricted to the Chief Elected Official and up to four key partners of their choosing.

To register, click the link below.

<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/stellar-community-informational-forum-tickets-10124433453>

For those interested in overnight accommodations, you may contact Corrie Scott at 800-824-2476 for a list of nearby hotels.

Stellar Communities Program Questions

Email specific questions for OCRA, IHCDA, or INDOT regarding the Letter of Interest or the Stellar Communities Program can be sent to either of the following:

Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority
Carmen Lethig
clethig@ihcda.in.gov

Indiana Department of Transportation
Ann Bishop
Abishop1@indot.in.gov

Office of Community and Rural Affairs
Contact your Community Liaison, contact information can be found by clicking the link below
<http://www.in.gov/ocra/2330.htm>